

INSURANCE DIVISION[191]

Notice of Intended Action

Twenty-five interested persons, a governmental subdivision, an agency or association of 25 or more persons may demand an oral presentation hereon as provided in Iowa Code section 17A.4(1)“b.”

Notice is also given to the public that the Administrative Rules Review Committee may, on its own motion or on written request by any individual or group, review this proposed action under section 17A.8(6) at a regular or special meeting where the public or interested persons may be heard.

Pursuant to the authority of Iowa Code section 507B.12, the Insurance Division hereby gives Notice of Intended Action to amend Chapter 15, “Unfair Trade Practices,” Iowa Administrative Code.

The rules in Chapter 15 provide standards and procedures for recommendations to consumers that result in transactions involving annuity products so that the insurance needs and financial objectives of consumers at the times of the transactions are appropriately addressed. The proposed amendments to the rules are intended to bring the rules into accord with a new model regulation drafted by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners. The Division intends that the amendments shall become effective January 1, 2011. The Division also intends that insurance companies and producers shall comply with the rules beginning January 1, 2011, for policies sold in Iowa on or after January 1, 2011.

Any interested person may make written suggestions or comments on these proposed amendments on or before June 8, 2010. Such written materials should be directed to Rosanne Mead, Assistant Insurance Commissioner, Iowa Insurance Division, 330 Maple Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319; fax (515)281-3059.

Also, there will be a public hearing on June 8, 2010, at 10 a.m. at the offices of the Iowa Insurance Division, 330 Maple Street, Des Moines, Iowa, at which time persons may present their views either orally or in writing. At the hearing, persons will be asked to give their names and addresses for the record and to confine their remarks to the subject of the amendments.

Any persons who intend to attend a public hearing and have special requirements, such as those relating to hearing or mobility impairments, should contact the Division and advise of specific needs.

These amendments are intended to implement Iowa Code chapter 507B.

The following amendments are proposed.

ITEM 1. Amend rule 191—15.68(507B) as follows:

191—15.68(507B) Purpose. The purpose of these rules is to require insurers to establish a system to supervise recommendations and to set forth standards and procedures for recommendations to consumers that result in transactions involving annuity products so that the insurance needs and financial objectives of consumers at the times of the transactions are appropriately addressed. ~~The rules in this division apply to all annuities not exempted under rule 15.69(507B) that are issued on or after January 1, 2007.~~

ITEM 2. Amend rule 191—15.69(507B) as follows:

191—15.69(507B) Applicability and scope.

15.69(1) These rules shall apply to any recommendation to purchase, ~~or exchange or replace~~ an annuity made to a consumer on or after January 1, 2011, by an insurance producer, or by an insurer where no producer is involved, that results in the purchase, ~~or exchange or replacement~~ recommended.

15.69(2) Unless otherwise specifically included, this rule shall not apply to ~~recommendations~~ transactions involving:

a. Direct-response solicitations where there is no recommendation based on information collected from the consumer pursuant to these rules.

b. No change.

ITEM 3. Amend rule **191—15.70(507B)**, definitions of “Annuity” and “Recommendation,” as follows:

“*Annuity*” means ~~a fixed annuity or variable~~ an annuity that is an insurance product under state law, individually solicited, whether the product is classified as an individual or group annuity.

“*Recommendation*” means advice provided by an insurance producer, or an insurer where no producer is involved, to an individual consumer that results in a purchase, ~~or exchange~~ or replacement of an annuity in accordance with that advice.

ITEM 4. Adopt the following new definitions in rule **191—15.70(507B)**:

“*Continuing education credit*” or “*CE credit*” means one credit as defined in rule 191—11.2(505,522B).

“*Continuing education provider*” or “*CE provider*” means a CE provider as defined in rule 191—11.2(505,522B).

“*FINRA*” means the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority or a succeeding agency.

“*Replacement*” means a transaction in which a new policy or contract is to be purchased, and it is known or should be known to the proposing producer, or to the proposing insurer if there is no producer, that, by reason of the transaction, an existing policy or contract has been or is to be:

1. Lapsed, forfeited, surrendered or partially surrendered, assigned to the replacing insurer or otherwise terminated;
2. Converted to reduced paid-up insurance, continued as extended term insurance, or otherwise reduced in value by the use of nonforfeiture benefits or other policy values;
3. Amended so as to effect either a reduction in benefits or in the term for which coverage would otherwise remain in force or for which benefits would be paid;
4. Reissued with any reduction in cash value; or
5. Used in a financed purchase.

“*Suitability information*” means information that is reasonably appropriate to determine the suitability of a recommendation, including the following:

1. Age;
2. Annual income;
3. Financial situation and needs, including the financial resources used for the funding of the annuity;
4. Financial experience;
5. Financial objectives;
6. Intended use of the annuity;
7. Financial time horizon;
8. Existing assets, including investment and life insurance holdings;
9. Liquidity needs;
10. Liquid net worth;
11. Risk tolerance; and
12. Tax status.

ITEM 5. Amend subrules 15.71(1) and 15.71(2) as follows:

15.71(1) In recommending to a consumer the purchase of an annuity or the exchange of an annuity that results in another insurance transaction or series of insurance transactions, the insurance producer, or the insurer where no producer is involved, shall have reasonable grounds for believing that the recommendation is suitable for the consumer on the basis of the facts disclosed by the consumer as to the consumer’s investments and other insurance products and as to the consumer’s financial situation and needs, including the consumer’s suitability information, and that there is a reasonable basis to believe all of the following:

a. The consumer has been reasonably informed of various features of the recommended annuity, such as: the potential surrender period and surrender charge; potential tax penalty if the consumer sells, exchanges, surrenders or annuitizes the annuity; mortality and expense fees; investment advisory fees;

potential charges for and features of riders; limitations on interest returns; insurance and investment components; and market risk;

b. The consumer would benefit from certain features of the annuity, such as tax-deferred growth, annuitization, death benefit, or living benefit;

c. The particular annuity as a whole, the underlying subaccounts to which funds are allocated at the time of purchase or exchange of the annuity, and riders and similar product enhancements, if any, are suitable (and in the case of an exchange or replacement, the transaction as a whole is suitable) for the particular consumer based on the consumer's suitability information; and

d. In the case of an exchange or replacement of an annuity, the exchange or replacement is suitable, including taking into consideration whether:

(1) The consumer will incur a surrender charge, be subject to the commencement of a new surrender period, lose existing benefits (such as death benefit, living benefit, or other contractual benefits), or be subject to increased fees, investment advisory fees or charges for riders and similar product enhancements;

(2) The consumer would benefit from product enhancements and improvements; and

(3) The consumer has had another annuity exchange or replacement and, in particular, an exchange or replacement within the preceding 36 months.

15.71(2) Prior to the execution of a purchase, ~~or exchange or replacement~~ of an annuity resulting from a recommendation, an insurance producer, or an insurer where no producer is involved, shall make reasonable efforts to obtain the consumer's suitability information concerning:

~~a. The consumer's financial status;~~

~~b. The consumer's tax status;~~

~~c. The consumer's investment objectives; and~~

~~d. Such other information used or considered to be reasonable by the insurance producer, or the insurer where no producer is involved, in making recommendations to the consumer.~~

ITEM 6. Rescind subrules **15.71(3)** to **15.71(5)**.

ITEM 7. Adopt the following **new** subrules 15.71(3) to 15.71(8):

15.71(3) Except as permitted under subrule 15.71(4), an insurer shall not issue an annuity recommended to a consumer unless there is a reasonable basis to believe the annuity is suitable based on the consumer's suitability information.

15.71(4) Exceptions.

a. Except as provided under paragraph 15.71(4) "b," neither an insurance producer, nor an insurer, shall have any obligation to a consumer under subrule 15.71(1) or 15.71(3) related to any annuity transaction if:

(1) No recommendation is made;

(2) A recommendation was made and was later found to have been prepared based on inaccurate material information provided by the consumer;

(3) A consumer refuses to provide relevant suitability information and the annuity transaction is not recommended; or

(4) A consumer decides to enter into an annuity transaction that is not based on a recommendation of the insurer or the insurance producer.

b. An insurer's issuance of an annuity subject to paragraph 15.71(4) "a" shall be reasonable under all the circumstances actually known to the insurer at the time the annuity is issued.

15.71(5) An insurance producer or, where no insurance producer is involved, the responsible insurer representative, shall at the time of sale:

a. Make a record of any recommendation subject to subrule 15.71(1);

b. Obtain a customer-signed statement documenting a customer's refusal to provide suitability information, if any; and

c. Obtain a customer-signed statement acknowledging that an annuity transaction is not recommended if a customer decides to enter into an annuity transaction that is not based on the insurance producer's or insurer's recommendation.

15.71(6) Insurers' duties to supervise.

a. An insurer shall establish a supervision system that is reasonably designed to achieve the insurer's and its insurance producers' compliance with rules 191—15.68(507B) through 191—15.75(507B) including, but not limited to, the following:

(1) The insurer shall maintain reasonable procedures to inform its insurance producers of the requirements of these rules and shall incorporate the requirements of these rules into relevant insurance producer training manuals;

(2) The insurer shall establish standards for insurance producer product training and shall maintain reasonable procedures to require its insurance producers to comply with the requirements of rule 191—15.72(507B);

(3) The insurer shall provide product-specific training and training materials which explain all material features of its annuity products to its insurance producers;

(4) The insurer shall maintain procedures for review of each recommendation prior to issuance of an annuity that are designed to ensure that there is a reasonable basis to determine that a recommendation is suitable. Such review procedures may apply a screening system for the purpose of identifying selected transactions for additional review and may be accomplished electronically or through other means including, but not limited to, physical review. Such an electronic or other system may be designed to require additional review only of those transactions identified for additional review by the selection criteria;

(5) The insurer shall maintain reasonable procedures to detect recommendations that are not suitable. These procedures may include, but are not limited to, confirmation of consumer suitability information, systematic customer surveys, interviews, confirmation letters and programs of internal monitoring. Nothing in this subparagraph prevents an insurer from complying with this subparagraph by applying sampling procedures or by confirming suitability information after issuance or delivery of the annuity; and

(6) The insurer shall annually provide a report to senior management, including to the senior manager responsible for audit functions, which details a review, with appropriate testing, reasonably designed to determine the effectiveness of the supervision system, the exceptions found, and corrective action taken or recommended, if any.

b. Third-party supervisor.

(1) Nothing in this subrule restricts an insurer from contracting for performance of a function (including maintenance of procedures) required under paragraph 15.71(6) "*a.*" An insurer is responsible for taking appropriate corrective action and may be subject to sanctions and penalties pursuant to rule 191—15.73(507B) regardless of whether the insurer contracts for performance of a function and regardless of the insurer's compliance with subparagraph 15.71(6) "*b*"(2).

(2) An insurer's supervision system under paragraph 15.71(6) "*a*" shall include supervision of contractual performance under this subrule including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Monitoring and, as appropriate, conducting audits to assure that the contracted function is properly performed; and

2. Annually obtaining a certification from a senior manager who has responsibility for the contracted function that the manager has a reasonable basis to represent, and does represent, that the function is properly performed.

c. An insurer is not required to include in its system of supervision an insurance producer's recommendations to consumers of products other than the annuities offered by the insurer.

15.71(7) An insurance producer shall not dissuade, or attempt to dissuade, a consumer from:

a. Truthfully responding to an insurer's request for confirmation of suitability information;

b. Filing a complaint; or

c. Cooperating with the investigation of a complaint.

15.71(8) Compliance with FINRA.

a. Sales made in compliance with FINRA requirements pertaining to suitability and supervision of annuity transactions shall satisfy the requirements under these rules. This subrule applies to FINRA member broker-dealer sales of variable annuities and fixed annuities if the suitability and supervision

are similar to those applied to variable annuity sales. However, nothing in this subrule shall limit the insurance commissioner's ability to enforce (including investigate) the provisions of this regulation.

b. For paragraph 15.71(8) "a" to apply, an insurer shall:

(1) Monitor the FINRA member broker-dealer using information collected in the normal course of an insurer's business; and

(2) Provide to the FINRA member broker-dealer information and reports that are reasonably appropriate to assist the FINRA member broker-dealer to maintain its supervision system.

ITEM 8. Renumber rules **191—15.72(507B)** and **191—15.73(507B)** as **191—15.73(507B)** and **191—15.74(507B)**.

ITEM 9. Adopt the following new rule 191—15.72(507B):

191—15.72(507B) Insurance producer training.

15.72(1) An insurance producer shall not solicit the sale of an annuity product unless the insurance producer has adequate knowledge of the product to recommend the annuity and the insurance producer is in compliance with the insurer's standards for product training. An insurance producer may rely on insurer-provided product-specific training standards and materials to comply with this subrule.

15.72(2) Training required.

a. One-time course.

(1) An insurance producer who engages in the sale of annuity products shall complete a one-time four-credit training course approved by the Iowa insurance division and provided by an education provider approved by the insurance division.

(2) Insurance producers may not engage in the sale of annuities until the annuity training course required under this rule has been completed.

b. The minimum length of the training required under this rule shall be sufficient to qualify for at least four CE credits, but may be longer.

c. The training required under this rule shall include information on the following topics:

(1) The types of annuities and various classifications of annuities;

(2) Identification of the parties to an annuity;

(3) How fixed, variable and indexed annuity contract provisions affect consumers;

(4) The application of income taxation of qualified and nonqualified annuities;

(5) The primary uses of annuities;

(6) Appropriate sales practices; and

(7) Replacement and disclosure requirements.

d. Providers of courses intended to comply with this rule shall cover all topics listed in the prescribed outline and shall not present any marketing information or provide training on sales techniques or provide specific information about a particular insurer's products. Additional topics may be offered in conjunction with and in addition to the required outline.

e. A provider of an annuity training course intended to comply with this rule shall register as a CE provider in this state and comply with the rules and guidelines applicable to insurance producer continuing education courses as set forth in 191—Chapter 11.

f. Annuity training courses may be conducted and completed by classroom or self-study methods in accordance with 191—Chapter 11.

g. Providers of annuity training shall comply with the reporting requirements and shall issue certificates of completion in accordance with 191—Chapter 11.

h. Satisfaction of the training requirements of another state that are substantially similar to the provisions of this subrule shall be deemed to satisfy the training requirements of this subrule in this state.

i. An insurer shall verify that an insurance producer has completed the annuity training course required under this subrule before allowing the producer to sell an annuity product for that insurer. An insurer may satisfy its responsibility under this subrule by obtaining certificates of completion of the training course or obtaining reports provided by Iowa insurance commissioner-sponsored database

systems or vendors or from a reasonably reliable commercial database vendor that has a reporting arrangement with approved continuing education providers.

ITEM 10. Amend renumbered rule 191—15.73(507B) as follows:

191—15.73(507B) ~~Mitigation of responsibility~~ Compliance; mitigation; penalties.

15.73(1) ~~The~~ An insurer is responsible for compliance with this regulation. If a violation occurs, either because of the action or inaction of the insurer or its insurance producer, the commissioner may order:

a. An insurer to take reasonably appropriate corrective action for any consumer harmed by the insurer's, or by its insurance producer's, violation of the rules of this division;

b. ~~An~~ A general agency, independent agency or the insurance producer to take reasonably appropriate corrective action for any consumer harmed by the insurance producer's violation of the rules of this division; and

c. ~~A general agency or independent agency that employs or contracts with an insurance producer to sell or solicit the sale of annuities to consumers, to take reasonably appropriate corrective action for any consumer harmed by the insurance producer's violation of the rules of this division. Appropriate penalties and sanctions.~~

15.73(2) Any applicable penalty under Iowa Code chapter 507B for a violation of the rules in Division V of this chapter may be reduced or eliminated if corrective action for the consumer was taken promptly after a violation was discovered or the violation was not part of a pattern or practice.